

Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission
Meeting Minutes – DRAFT
March 11, 2016, 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Novi Public Library, 45255 W. 10 Mile Rd., Novi, MI 48375

Attendance

Present: Asim Alavi, Nasim Ansari, Scott T. Ayotte, Connie Dang, Willie Dechavez, Lisa Gray, Jamie Hsu, Roland Hwang, Soraya Kim, Grace Lee, David Long, Guozhen Lu, Mahima Mahadevan, Toshiki Masaki, Kaushik Nag, Joe Tasma, Jeffrey Vang and Tsu-Yin Wu

Present by Phone: Anand Kumar

Ex-officio and Guests: Bing Goei, Director of MONA, Senator Hoon-Yung Hopgood, Andre Goulet and Tack-Yong Kim of *MI Asian* publication

Staff: Denise Yee Grim, Community Liaison

Unable to attend: Jin-Kyu Koh, Ryan Rosario and Mary McLellan, Commissions Liaison-MDCR

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Jamie Hsu called the regular meeting of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission to order at 9:14 a.m. on March 11, 2016.

Jamie thanked Novi Public Library for hosting the meeting and Ramesh Kumar for his support. He welcomed two new commissioners, Kaushik Nag and Lisa Gray and asked them to share their backgrounds. He acknowledged the past commissioner, Hannah Feikema, and MDCR Commissions Liaison, Mary McLellan, for their services and contributions.

II. Transition to the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

We are transitioning from MDCR to LARA on March 26th. Two other ethnic commissions, Hispanic/Latino Commission and the Commission of Middle Eastern Affairs are going to be housed in the LARA. This will allow the three commissions to share and collaborate easier along with the support of MONA.

Jamie had a meeting with Mike Zimmer and the CFO to discuss MAPAAC. They assured him that we will have our existing budget money and that MAPAAC will maintain their work pace and will not be slowed down due to synchronization with the other two commissioners. There will be a new Commissions Liaison assigned for MAPAAC.

Bing commented MAPAAC is looked at a 'model' for the other ethnic commissions. LARA/MONA has scheduled ethnic chair meetings to discuss how we can identify common issues between the ethnic commissions, so we can use our limited resources together and understanding of who we are and what we are doing within our individual commissions.

III. Approval of December 4, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Toshiki Masaki, Secretary, asked if there were any additional comments or questions from the draft minutes. Asim Alavi motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Roland Hwang seconded. Motion passed.

IV. SIG's Initiatives Report and Recommendations

SIG 1: Mahima Mahadevan, leader of SIG 1, shared the new objective of their SIG to: Collaborate with policy makers to educate and support programs and policies impacting the APA communities.

The two main priorities identified are:

1. Take the input and issues from SIG 2's town hall meetings and survey and find an appropriate way to present this information to the legislative bodies and strategic partners.

Last year we had a networking lunch following the APA Heritage Day in Lansing. SIG 1 would like to create a one-two pager to summarize on the concerns from our outreach efforts last year from our town hall and survey summary and hand them out at the networking luncheon on May 10th.

Moving forward, we want to work with other people and ask the question, *what we can do about it*. SIG 1 would like to hire an intern or consultant to draft recommendations by researching these issues and/or the policies that are related to these issues, what are the legislation touch on these issues, what are the agencies that provide the services of these issues. SIG 1 will review the recommendations and identify and determine what are realistic and doable, present it to the commission for a vote and it will become MAPAAC's commitment to implement the recommendations.

2. Last year MAPAAC developed good strategic partnerships of the Asian American Engagement Coalition (AACE) lead by APIAVote-MI, and their focus aligns with our focus on the issues of the APA communities and address the concerns with the legislative bodies, how to get their concerns to them. They didn't want to replicate their work, SIG 1 want to help amplify their work. AACE are inviting the APA community to their Civic Leadership Engagement Conference in March to build skills and knowledge for increasing personal and community civic participation, with will prepare them in their Legislative Day during APA Heritage Month. In 2015, MAPAAC coordinated with APIAVote-MI and AACE and combined APA Heritage Day and Legislative Day in Lansing. SIG 1 is recommended supporting the Engagement Conference and the partnership of APA Heritage Day again for 2016.

Besides the AACE partnership, MAPAAC is a partner of the APA Legislative Caucus. SIG 1 will continue the relationship in addressing the concerns of the APA community.

SIG 1 to work with SIG 2 on their plan to coordinate a major town hall meeting to bring in legislators and community members. With the election coming up in 2016, SIG 1 felt we need to have interaction and education with the community and those who are running for office, changes in the election law and changes ballots. SIG 1 would post this event along with the APIAVote-MI and AAEO candidate forums.

Jamie commented to link with LARA legislative liaison or MONA to identify policies or programs available related to our issues before hiring a person.

SIG 2: Tsu-Yin Wu, leader of SIG 2, shared the initiative is to solicit and listen to the voices and concerns of APAs and keep an ongoing list of the notable issues of town hall forums and action plan. SIG 2 conducted a total of 11 town halls in metro Detroit, Grand Rapids and Battle Creek. They prioritized the 10 major issues; no ranking order. Some topics are addressed by other SIGs. Among the issues, they placed lack of awareness to public services and programs and state departments' services, benefits for the elderly and disable in one category. To address these issues, we would do 3-4 forums to share some of the information back to the community in major geographic locations in the state. Invite the community, state government office and staff, community agencies, and legislators.

On the issue of lack of resources for new immigrants and new students, SIG 2 suggested to partner or co-sponsor workshops with APACC or CAPA to create a collaborative effort in providing information and learning skills to help them with job interviews.

The issue of additional help and support of ELS and citizenship classes and working with community agencies to assist in recognizing their community needs and possibly providing some funding support to subsidize these initiatives they are working on.

On the issue of obtaining grant resources to build their community centers and expand their services. MAPAAC can provide a workshop on resources and help in how to apply for grants. Introduce them to the Legislative Caucus who may be able to introduce to potential grantors.

Mahima shared a suggestion to convening different funding, personnel and officers and communicate information of what are foundations? What are granting agencies? What are they looking for? We have enough contacts within MAPAAC, so we can work together in finding assistance.

Other comments included:

- Ideas of where to hold the forum: Using existing gathering places - i.e. Chinese schools in Novi/Northville area.
- The town hall attendees are looking for a response for their participation. Recommended for emailing the town hall attendees of providing them with a summary of our action plan to inform them that we are doing something to address their issues. Jamie commented to add it to SIG 2 initiatives or MAPAAC's communication. To thank you them for their participation, outline what we heard and what we are planning to do.
- Suggest the invitation/flyer is listed as an APA forum, not restricted to one ethnic group.
- Suggest to include a short Invitation in the language we represent.
- In expanding our outreach to employers – multicultural groups within the companies and/or corporations.
- To build trust within the community, we need to align with the faith-based communities.
- Partner with hospitals and health care facilities that address population's health inequity.

Action step: To grow our outreach list with names and contact information, we will create a google doc for the commissioners to contribute their information.

Kaushik will share additional information of outreach.

SIG 3: Roland Hwang, leader of SIG 3. They are charged with the examination of discrimination and equity of access to the state. Based upon a survey in 2014, bullying is an issues. They are having their second anti-bullying forum on April 16th in Ann Arbor and Roland shared the presenters, agenda and community partners.

Korematsu presentations in respect to civil liberties: They have three successful presentation in Northville high school, Grand Valley State University and the University of Michigan Law School. There are plans to continue the Korematsu presentation in 2017: January 27th in Dearborn public schools – possibly in Fordson High School, Plymouth/Canton schools – Asian American Club on January 30th at Canton High School and potential events at Wayne State University and Western State University.

In the Allendale area, local TV news interviewed Karen Korematsu and televised the event that evening to the local community. Also, Grand Valley State University President Hobb mentioned

Korematsu event at the next trustee meeting. Also there was coverage in the University of Michigan's *Michigan Record*.

Karen Korematsu's visit to Lansing was successful. Thanks to the arrangement of the AAEC and the Legislative Caucus, she met legislators from both senate and house and made it to the floors for congratulatory messages. We received encouragement of the passing of the Korematsu Day bill, but still waiting for the progress to occur.

Jamie encouraged the commissioners to attend at least one of the anti-bullying forum or Korematsu presentation, so you can connect with the community.

Suggestions:

- The general public are not aware of Fred Korematsu, for SIG 3 and MAPAAC to think about how we can reach a broader audience to educate them of Fred Korematsu.
- Post an article in the ethnic community newspapers about why we should have a Fred Korematsu Day in Michigan.
- We need to look at the regional media outlets.
- Provide educational articles and distribute them to the community papers, local and ethnic.

Roland inquired if the commission has any role of helping in developing any policies that may affect our resident communities. i.e. The Governor had the message about putting a stop of Syrian refugee's influx. It's supposed to be a two-way street, the commission is to advise the office of the Governor and as well as taking trickle-down information and sending it out to the community. We need to examine.

Jamie commented that all the ethnic commissions are together in LARA, we can address any bill or/and legislation that would affect our communities together. Bing commented that this will be the commitment the ethnic chairs to work together will give us more coordination to address legislation.

Guozhen Lu shared the former NYPD cop, Peter Liang's case and wondered how he should respond. Roland gave a quick overview of the case and stated that it divided the Asian community. It's a complex issue. Jamie responded that MAPAAC is to educate the community of discrimination like the Korematsu presentations. This is a New York case and we are a Michigan commission. If this happened in Michigan, we would respond.

Toshiki Masaki said that the discussion can be tabled for the next commission meeting. We cannot be dealing with individual cases. We need to have policy or guidelines. We use this incident as an example - locally, nationally and internationally. Asim Alavi seconded the decision and there is some groundwork in the infant years of the commission and that there is a lot of ground work to be done in the community level to build a strong support in which in later years to tackle bigger issues.

Jamie shared his thoughts especially for the new commissioners as Asian Pacific Americans, we can look back in our ethnic background, where we came from and realize that it is very diverse. Even within Asia there are disagreements within the countries. We should not get involved in the disagreements. We do not take any position on any ethnic group between another ethnic group. We need to be careful if you are asked to take a side. We as a commission are appointed by the Governor to deal with the affairs of the APAs in Michigan.

SIG 4: Joe Tasma, leader of SIG 4. The initiative is to promote and recognize APA contributions and achievements to the state of Michigan. Last year we premiered the Recognition and Appreciation Dinner and we will continue the event this year.

The commissioners reviewed the draft nomination form and ask for their support in nominate potential candidates. The call for nomination will be advertised and ask for support from their strategic partners. The nomination form will be available online on MAPAAC's web site.

The selection committee would make the selection of the nomination. We need to have all the commissioners in the decision of the nominations.

The key phrases are to make an impact and a greater difference in the community. SIG 4 will review and take the commissioners' feedback and draft criteria for each award. Scott volunteered to assist in drafting the criteria.

Willie Dechavez shared that is year is our 14th APA Heritage Day Celebration. The date of the event is on May 10th. MAPAAC will jointly sponsored the event with APIAVote-Michigan. We will have a meeting with APIAVote-Michigan to complete the program. Event schedule is: 11:00 am – 12 pm at the Capitol rotunda and followed by a networking luncheon from 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm at Mackinac room located at the House of Representative building. The emcee will be Joy Wang, video journalist of Lansing WILX 10. We are hoping to get publicity and an interview with Jamie during the event.

Invitation letters to the Governor and Mike Zimmer, LARA director, will be sent. MSU Thai Dancers will be invited and we will have cultural ambassadors to be hosts of the event. The commissioners were asked to suggest potential keynote speakers and APIAVote- Michigan will provide a list also to compare and send an invitation. MAPAAC will provide funding for the transportation for the keynote speaker. We will have a Save a Date flyers will be produced and send to the community.

Soraya Kim asked the commissioners to make it priority to attend the Celebration in Lansing.

In addition, SIG 4 will lead in creating influential people in community.

Jamie thanked the SIG leaders and their report and for the commissioners participation. He appreciated the SIGs hard work and sharing their great ideas. Everyone can participate in every SIG, because they are intertwined. He encouraged the commissioners to continue their hard work and continue to participate in the SIGs any way they can.

V. MAPAAC Communication Strategy

Jamie sensed that there is a stronger need to communicate what MAPAAC is doing and what MAPAAC is all about. The executive committee will handle the communication strategy. He reviewed the handout with the commissioners. He asked the commissioners for comments in a systematic way and if they feel that it is a need to do this.

Suggestions:

- Like and Follow other organizations and individuals Facebook page and ask them to increase our Facebook page.
- Web site as a formal channel for legislators.
- Denise will work with the LARA communication department for our communication strategy.
- Maybe have a 2-way conversation. Change the name to Engagement Strategy instead of a Communication Strategy.
- Create a forum on Facebook or on our Web site for people to ask questions; to post questions to MAPAAC.

- Have a sort of Friends of MAPAACs of former members of MAPAAC to be used as a list to inform them of upcoming activities.

VI. Budget Update:

Denise Yee Grim gave the financial report on behalf of Ryan Rosario, Trustee. The total expenditure as of February 28, 2016 was \$23,188.11, which left a balance of \$87,711.89. There is allocation of \$10,000 for each SIG. Because of the transition to LARA, all invoices and expense reports must be submitted to Denise by March 18th to make it a clean transition of funds.

VII. Administrative Update

Denise informed the commissioners that LARA will order new business cards on March 26th. The commissioners should continue using their present business cards until further notice. Denise will ask LARA to mail their new business cards directly to their home. The commissioners reviewed the MAPAAC contact list to make sure their information is correct. Ten new MAPAAC brochures with the LARA address were distributed to each commissioner.

IX. Determine locations for commission meetings

The commissioners decided to change the second quarterly meeting date from Friday, June 17th to Friday, June 10th and change the time to the afternoon, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, to attend the Consulate General of Japan reception in the evening. Denise will check if the Chaldean Community Foundation in Sterling Heights will host the meeting.

It was agreed to have the September 10th meeting in Kalamazoo. Nasim Ansari will setup the meeting and let Denise know the location and invite APA community organizations.

Lansing is a consideration for December 9th meeting.

IX. New Business:

Proposal for 'State of APA Community': The proposal will to let people know about we are doing. Jaime would like an initial reaction from the commissioners. Similar to the State of the State.

Suggestion:

- Combine with the Recognition and Appreciation Dinner
- Segments of the communities topics– Advancing in Education, Health and Jobs
- Partner with APIAVote-MI

REI Fellowship Program Update: Denise gave a background of the REI Fellowship program. Each partner organization will receive a Fellow and MAPAAC will have a Fellow from April – January 2017. Denise will be the site coordinator. The Fellow is paid for the fellowship. The executive committee will assist Denise with the Fellow's work plan that includes SIG's initiatives.

Nasim purposed to have MAPAAC participation in a panel discussion at Western University's Global Michigan Initiative primary focus of jobs and marketing. He asked if MAPAAC would provide the topics and theme of the program. The program director will provide the venue and snacks for the program. Attendees would be students and the citizen of Kalamazoo. Jamie said that we will follow up with Nasim on the topics and theme.

Bing Goei informed the commission of Bill SB501 being considered by our state legislature that could have negative implications for MAPAAC's constituents. Bing is suggesting that MAPAAC study the Bill and submit their recommendations to APA Legislative Caucus and other appropriate leaders.

Roland commented that it is appropriate for MAPAAC to take a position and for Jamie to interact with the LARA legislative liaison to interact with the Secretary of State to see if there is some negotiation in modifying the bill and to take it off the table.

Jamie motioned for Roland to draft a letter to address the language of the bill which will not be conducive to attract more visitors to come to Michigan and we as the commission encourage full and fair participation by all immigrants or visitors and we express our concerns. Send it to APA Legislation Caucus, LARA and MONA. Guozhen Lu seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

X. Public Comments

Tack-Yong Kim shared *MI Asian* publication. They would like to be the spokesperson for the commission to share information to the Pan Asian and general population.

The Korean company is sponsoring the PGA Championship in Michigan and he has information to share with the commissioners.

XI. Announcements

Roland shared a flyer of an employer workshop to understand the obligations of immigration law. The workshop will be at the American Chinese Association at the Chinese Community Center in Madison Heights.

XII. Adjournment:

A motion from Guozhen Lu and seconded by Willie Dechavez. Motion passed.

The meeting concluded at 12:29 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Denise Yee Grim, April 5, 2016

Minutes submitted by

Toshiki Masaki, Secretary